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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Discussion, informally, with [REDACTED], Office of the DD/S, re
Personnel Records in OPC days, Prior to a Central Personnel
Office - 7 Sept. 56

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BY: [REDACTED]

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25X1A9a 1. [REDACTED] was first Chief, OPC and later Chief, Personnel, Covert.

25X1A9a 2. Regarding the OPC days: Col. [REDACTED] issued an order that personnel
file folders were to be centralized at the OPC level, that divisions and
branches were to turn over such material to [REDACTED]' office together with a
certification that all such material was released. Great bundles of material
were received; also the certifications. Yet, later, [REDACTED] had occasions
to observe division personnel files which were more complete and in better
order than his files. He found they had made copies of all they wanted to
keep, that they continued to retain papers which should have been in the
central personnel folder. He believes it was proven then that operating
DD/P divisions and branches are going to keep personnel material and they
won't be stopped. He observed that the present central personnel office has
certainly never tried to stop it.

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3. I posed, as only an off-the-record postulate, the question of the
feasibility of centralizing official personnel files at the division level
in DD/P. Mr. [REDACTED] considers it an excellent idea, stated:

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a. As indicated in 2 above, with the file centralized in OP,
duplicates flourish.

b. The division is the command echelon. Today, the field as well
as headquarters, reports directly to the division level. Because it
is a command level and because branches are contiguous to division
offices, [REDACTED] believes the division chiefs could consolidate personnel
files at the division level eliminating branch and desk copies.

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c. Problems of sterilization would be reduced because the files
would be under division control. Only when a file was to go out of the
division would sterilization be necessary. This would be done by the
division personnel officer.

d. One division's obtaining a file from another division would
be simplified. Today OP is called; OP then checks with the division in
which the subject employee is located to get release before sending the

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file to the requester. If the release is not granted at once, several calls are obviously made before the file is sent on its way. Under the posed system, the requesting office would call the division's personnel officer who would have authority to release the file in almost all cases. Even when he did not have such authority, release would be more rapid than under today's system.

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e. Mr. [] believed that with the personnel folder at the division level it would be used more and would hold more papers than it does today. Knowing it was under their control, the operators would be more willing to put relevant papers in it. When an employee was transferred out of a division, Mr. [] believed that the division would review the file prior to release to remove any non-permanent data and to sterilize where necessary. He did not consider this to be a burden. He volunteered that 80 to 90% of the field correspondence involved personnel matters.

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f. He suggests F4 Division for a trial run. When he was there the division chief did not approve a plan to centralize the working personnel files (unofficial) at the division level. However they have a new chief who is reported to be more in favor of the plan. Ed [] would be the man to see.

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g. He believed many problems would have to be solved before this could be effectuated; did not elaborate.

4. Other observations concerning personnel files:

a. Back in OPC days every employee had a 2-day evaluation by A&E, OTR. An evaluation report went in the personnel folder. It was keyed to the job for which the man was hired. It was not designed to be used as a tool for evaluating the man for a different job, but was being used that way. For this reason, [] removed them from the personnel folders - also because he felt too many people without the need to know were reading the A&E reports.

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b. Before my first question was put, [] offered this observation, which he has been in favor of for some time. (I inferred that this position was also taken in a Staff C study of the security of personnel records.) He believes there should be a covert sub-station for personnel folders in the I-J-K-L Buildings area. Then OP could route personnel folders to the sub-station from which they would be picked up by the requesting component. They would also be returned via the same routing. The personnel files messenger could make many trips per day to and from the sub center. In-transit folders would be locked up at the sub center at the end of each day. I-J-K-L personnel would only walk a block maximum to pick up folders. Service should increase because [] believes the personnel messenger loses too much time stopping at all contact points on each trip - hence less trips per day. He believes the sub-center should be under the control of the personnel representative on the SSA/DES.

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c. Another observation: [REDACTED] has proposed standardization of the personnel records to be maintained by the LI/P career boards. He believes he has written a memorandum on the subject.

Questions to be Considered Before Decentralizing the Official Personnel File

1. Should all the official file be decentralized? Perhaps the equivalent of a State Department administrative folder should remain in the Personnel Office. This is doubtful because many field personnel minutes are handled at the third echelon level.
2. Is the decentralization of the official file a separable phase or must other functions be decentralized simultaneously? It is separable.
 - a. Other functions which should be considered for subsequent decentralization are:
 - (1) Preparation of the Notice of Personnel Action, SF-50 is under study to determine the feasibility of semi-automatic preparation by use of special machines. Proper utilization of the machines may require centralization of the function but if the machines can be used for other work, it may be practicable to use them at the third echelon.
 - (2) Maintenance of ceiling controls. As the ceiling is subdivided by third echelon components, it can be controlled at this level. Whether it should be is a question of procedures integration and should be decided after a detailed examination of the procedures of the Records and Services Division, OP.
 - (3) Preparation of personnel statistics. This, too, requires an analysis of procedures integration. Overall personnel statistics must be issued by a central group but the basic statistics can be maintained at any level if uniform procedures are used. The machine-preparation of personnel statistics in FE Division is a pilot study which should contribute to solution of this problem. The Office of Central Reference is also using IBM machines to create personnel statistics for its own use.
 - (4) Qualifications records are maintained by the Qualifications Analysis Branch, OP. The system should be uniform but the records may well be maintained by third echelons. Many keep some records now, the most complete one found being in the Office of Research and Reports.
 - (5) The new profile sheet could be maintained by third echelons although the procedure should be uniform for maximum utilization. Third echelons and career boards have been preparing profiles for some time.

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- b. Functions which should remain centralized are:
- (1) Recruitment. Centralization assures efficient utilization of a single field force.
 - (2) Classification. This is technical professional work which is more economically administered centrally. Classification officers may be subject to unjustified pressure if they are under the control of third echelon chiefs.
 - (3) Personnel services deal directly with employees without regard to their organizational location and should remain centralized for economy and uniformity.
 - (4) Military personnel services and controls would be more costly and lose integration if decentralized.
3. How can we assure that all essential personnel papers are maintained if the file is decentralized? There are personnel officers in third echelon offices. They should be made responsible for the proper maintenance of the decentralized official file. They should be aided and trained, if necessary, by a small group of personnel files and procedures technicians in the Office of Personnel. This same group should have a personnel files audit function such as the Civil Service Commission exercises for these agencies under its control.
4. Should all third echelons maintain official personnel files? The operating components should, but it will probably be economical to maintain a second echelon file which will include the folders of staff office employees (not DD/P Senior Staffs).
5. Would it be better to put the official files in career boards? The boards are not operating groups and do not have the staffs to maintain the files. They should request the records they require. In DD/P this is no problem because the career board heads are third echelon directors.
6. Should the decentralization of the file be taken in several steps? Yes, in order to minimize confusion and maintain the necessary controls through development or extension of basic procedures. The steps should be by components, however, not by decentralizing parts of the file to all third echelons simultaneously which would split an employee's folder.
7. Will the maintenance of a decentralized file require a larger staff? I do not have the proof but it should take a smaller one if we include the time of all the people who are maintaining convenience files which it is proposed to eliminate.